

An Isleham Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies  
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Many of these stories were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014. They are supplemented by some selections 'From our Old Files' published in the Cambridge Independent Press and other notes.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbooks' of which this is a small section is published online at [bit.ly/CambsCollection](http://bit.ly/CambsCollection)

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.  
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – [www.mikepetty.org.uk](http://www.mikepetty.org.uk) for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2016

1897 09 08

An Isleham man was summoned for assaulting Thomas William Fenn. Complainant said he was in the Queen's Head inn at Isleham, when defendant came in and interfered with him, striking him twice and threatening to kill him. At last witness knocked him down and got away. Defendant had asked him for 1s. and then for 6d. but he replied he had not got it. After defendant had struck him twice he knocked him down with an iron spittoon. Defendant denied he had struck complainant, but said the latter half killed him with the spittoon. Case dismissed

1898 07 11

Messrs Green, Moyes and Wisbey attended the Lion Hotel, Cambridge, and offered by auction several beerhouses. The Lion and Lamb at Denver sold for £765. The Queen's Head at Hilgay realised £510. Lot three was the freehold beer house known as the Volunteer, Mildenhall which, together with a cottage, realised £710. The Swan beerhouse Isleham realised £460. The last lot was the fully licensed freehold public house in East Road, Cambridge known by the sign of the Red Lion. The bidding started at £600, and ultimately reached £975 at which figure it was disposed of. The prices realised are considered very satisfactory by the vendors

1899 01 11

The licensee of the Rising Sun inn at Isleham was charged with permitting gambling on his premises by raffling. P.C. Plumb said he found 20 men sitting in a back room and on a table was a basin. He saw a man throw dice from a dice box into the basin as he entered. Defendant acknowledged that raffling had been going on for a goose all day and a lot of bad characters were present. The goose had been won and taken away long before the constable visited the place.

1899 06 06

Last Sunday morning about 2,000 persons assembled at the ferry, Isleham, when eleven females and four males were baptised in the river Lark by the pastors of the Baptist chapels in the village. Reverend Newling remarked that they assembled upon the spot where the Rev C.H. Surgeon was baptised on May 3rd 1850

1900 04 04

The following appointments of parish constables were made: Burwell, H. Martin; Brinkley, F. Geo. Howard; Cheveley, J. Nicholls; Chippenham, A. Duffield; Dullingham, J. Smith; Fordham G.R. Godfrey; Isleham, J. Dilley; Soham H. Rouse; Wicken, W. Barton; Wood Ditton J.J. Howe & C. Cates.

1900 06 07

Isleham farm fire, p3

1901 10 25

Isleham marriage, p4 \*

1903 08 24

A unique scene was witnessed at Isleham when an elderly couple, named Mark and Sarah Turner, were publicly baptised in the river Lark and thereby became a member of the Baptist Church. The ceremony took place at the ferry water only a few yards from the house in which the couple live and was witnessed by upwards of a thousand people. Some cycled and drove whilst others came in farm carts, waggons and traps. An enterprising bargeman let his barge at a penny per head and this accommodated 50 people who were able to get a good view of the proceedings. The ferry also took a good number of passengers, whilst others found room in boats on the water.

1904 07 23

Isleham band furnishes a striking example of what can be accomplished by steady and determined work. It was only formed a year ago but has become an important and appreciated institution. Its members have had to work hard and faced their first public performance on the occasion of the Harvest Festival last October with trepidation. Recently they have given short open-air sacred concerts on the green on Sunday evenings after the services at the various places of worship. It is to be hoped that their success will stir up the inhabitants of other villages.

1904 12 07

A serious accident occurred to men repairing a railway bridge between Mildenhall and Isleham. At the time part of the arch of the bridge had been taken away and girders substituted. While standing on the arch it gave way and precipitated three men on to the railway which was blocked by the ruins of the bridge. By one o'clock however the line had been cleared and the injured men taken to Cambridge, a train having been stopped to convey them. Two others also fell with the bridge but fortunately escaped injury.

1906 02 12

A crowd of 300 packed Soham court to hear a case involving a heifer. It had been taken to the washlands on which Isleham parishioners are allowed to put their cattle but had later gone missing. The loser said: "When I went to bed I asked the Lord to show me my heifer, and he showed me it in John Collen's ground". But he swore it belonged to him, and his wife remembered it being born. The case lasted until 7.30, the court remaining crowded until judgement was given. 06 02 12a-c

1906 03 28

Isleham resisters, p3

1906 04 06

Rev S. Newling, a nonconformist minister of Isleham is spending a week in the Cambridge county gaol for non-payment of the educational portion of the poor rate. Magistrates issued a distress warrant but he had made over all his worldly goods to his wife, so he was committed to prison. It is expected that when he is released he will be met at the prison gates by several prominent members of the Free Church Council. 06 04 06

1906 04 07

The Isleham Baptist pastor was sentenced to seven days in Cambridge county gaol but only served four. Having entered on Monday evening he was released on Saturday, as they do not keep a prisoner over the Sunday. He brought out with him a huge lump of the brown bread that formed the chief article of his diet: it was served with tea for breakfast, with soup for dinner and cocoa for supper. 06 04 07c-d

1906 08 17

Isleham charity, p4

1906 12 19

Isleham Spion Kop, p3

1907 03 13

The Bell Inn, Isleham owned by Messrs Treadway and Percy, Soham brewers, was built of reed and plaster and was in a good state of repair. It included a taproom, cellar and three bedrooms with a clubroom and stabling for four horses. The tenant had a van and went out to feasts, which helped him make a living. There was also a weighbridge which weighed 100 loads a year; the charge was eightpence and the carter allowed one pint of beer out of the money. There were 16 licenced premises in the parish with four within 200 yards – the Cock White Horse and Griffin alehouses and the Crown beerhouse. 07 03 13a & b

1907 06 29

The Milkmaid was one of 13 licenced houses in Willingham and they could do away with half of them, magistrates were told. But there were 100 acres of market gardens all round where a great many men and girls were constantly employed and some came to the house for lunch. The trade had increased since the King William was closed and now did over a barrel a week

Also: Marquis of Granby, Woodman's Arms, Claremont, Golden Fleece; Swaffham Prior Anchor, Harston Green Man, Lt Shelford Three Horseshoes, Over Duke of Cumberland, Willingham Milkmaid - details, Isleham Bell, Fen Ditton Pike & Eel. Bassingbourn Tally Ho, 07 06 29 & a

1907 08 17

Another interesting discovery of Roman remains has recently been made in Isleham fen. Some workmen engaged in digging came upon the bed of an old river where they found the impress of a boat, surrounded by the heads of cattle and some pottery.

07 08 17

1907 08 28

An RSPCA Inspector saw a box of wild birds in the booking office at Isleham railway station addressed to a man in Islington. He found it contained a number of goldfinches together with some linnets, their wings fluttered through the side of the box. A birdcatcher of The Pits, Isleham claimed they were chaffinches. A linnet or chaffinch was worth fourpence while a goldfinch, newly caught, was worth about a shilling. Goldfinches had been sold for up to 30 shillings, but that was only after they'd been taught. 07 08 28 a & b

1908 02 07

A meeting was held at Isleham to explain the new Small Holdings Act. The soil is right, means of communication are all that can be desired and the class of people, if properly selected, are second to none. It would keep people on the land. The Rev Newling, Baptist pastor, said he helped at his brother's farm at Wisbech during the fruit season and often paid £50 a week for labour to the pickers on Saturday morning. 08 02 07 e

1908 06 26

Isleham pond where the water in East Road drains from off the highway has hitherto been cleaned out by men who have sold the mud as reimbursement. Now however they cannot find anyone to purchase it. A number have offered to do it for £3 and the mud will belong to the council or for £1.10 and the mud will belong to the men. I prefer the latter course as I have to dispose of the stuff and cannot find a buyer. – F. Fyson, clerk, Isleham Parish Council to Newmarket RDC. 08 06 26 p3

1908 07 31

Cambridgeshire County Council have purchased a farm at Milton by auction and arranged to hire land at Guilden Morden and Isleham for use as smallholdings. They have also been offered 166 acres at Herod's Farm Foxton for £3,500. Petitions have been received from applicants urging the early acquisition of land in Over and Wicken. CWN 08 07 31

1908 07 31

Twenty-six licensed houses are to close, magistrates decided. They include the Robin Hood at Litlington, Chesterton Long Reach, Swaffham Prior's Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Three Jolly Watermen in Waterbeach Fen. But the Fox in the Wood at Soham and the Cock at Isleham were spared after Police Superintendent Winter failed to appear to give evidence. The licence of the Black Horse at Over was renewed after the Star Brewery appealed. also Barrington Boot & Shoe, Bassingbourn Yew Tree, Steeple Morden Lion, Swaffham Prior John Bull, Bottisham Rose & Crown, Cottenham Six Bells, Oakington Lion and Lamb, Stapleford Hammer & Anvil, Swavesey Chequers, Willingham Little Rose, Castle Camps George, Balsham Ram, Linton White Hart, Cambridge Yorkshire Grey, Old Red Lion, Nine Pines, Thatched House, Baker's Arms, Red Lion, Brewery Tap & Carpenters' Arms. CWN 08 07 31

1908 09 25

An Isleham bird catcher caught 12 goldfinches which he kept in his kitchen. Most died but he sent three to the railway station in a box labelled 'Birds with care'. These were seized by an RSPCA inspector and released. Now he claimed damages for the loss of income. The judge said the goldfinches were like bees and belonged to their captor. He was awarded £1.10s. CWN 08 08 21 p3  
Isleham theft, Cock Inn, Isleham Bank – 08 09 25 p6

1909 01 08

Pension day in villages – Cottenham, Swaffham Bulbeck, Histon, Over, Stretham, Isleham, Haddenham, Longstanton – 09 01 08

1909 05 21

Cock Inn, Isleham fen case – 09 05 21

1909 06 04

The banks of the River Lark at Isleham ferry were crowded with nearly 4,000 people, for the news had spread that the number of baptisms would be rather larger than usual this year. Actually there were 29, of whom nine were females, who were baptised by the Rev Samuel Boyce-Newling of the High Street Chapel. Such a scene as this has been seen on Whit-Sunday for generations. Many a trooper who rode with Cromwell's Ironsides gave proof of his conversion by public baptism at this Ferry. 09 06 04

1909 08 27

Isleham Hospital Sunday parade a success – CWN 09 08 27

1909 11

Mr Dennis, a man of the utmost credence in Isleham, states quite seriously that on Tuesday night he saw a floating light in the sky. Struck by the unusual spectacle he watched it proceed in a straight light across the railroad and on to Fordham. Mr Dilley, the Newmarket and Isleham carrier was on the road near Fordham at the same time but saw nothing. CWN 09 11

1910 05 06

Under the new Midwives Act no woman can habitually attend women in childbirth unless she is certified. There were 54 midwives on the register of whom 30 were trained. Ten of the untrained women were between the ages of 65-75 and might need replacing before long by reason of death or infirmity. There was only one trained midwife at Willingham and an untrained woman at Landbeach. There were none at Isleham, Burwell, Wicken, Upware, Milton, Cottenham, Swavesey or Histon. Some mothers can afford the fee of a medical practitioner but are unable also to pay the full fee of a skilled nurse and so may turn to unregistered women 10 05 06b & c

1910 10 14

Isleham bird-catcher released from gaol – 10 10 14c

1911 05 26

Isleham woman suicide in river between Mepal and Sutton Gault – 11 05 26f

1911 06 16

An inquest into the death of a 17-year old labourer working in Mr Frost's clunch pits at Isleham were told it had been his job to fill the carts with top soil and drive them away. Three older men then felled the clunch with crowbars. The lad had gone under the 'lynch' (the wall of clunch) and started to undercut it with a pick. He'd only picked about half a barrow full before it fell, due to a sand vein in the clunch. He had no business to use a pick at all, but young fellows liked to bring down a lot of clunch with a few blows. Every precaution was taken at the pit, this was an accident. 11 06 16a

1911 09 08

Fire at Black Hall Farm, Isleham fen – 11 09 08

1912 05 10

Isleham High Street Baptist Church celebrated its centenary when a thousand people gathered in a marquee in a meadow in the centre of the village. A sensation was caused when the pastor, Rev S.B. Newling, kissed the Rev John Clifford to thank him for being present. Dr Clifford said he did not know what his wife would say. He had made it a rule through his ministerial life never to kiss anybody over 13 except his wife and daughters. He had sent Mr Newling into the ministry; he'd also sent two women and felt that when the women got into the pulpit the men would have a bad time. He was glad he would not have to compete when the women came along. 12 05 10b & c

1912 10 25

Rev Newling drew attention to the state of a cottage at Isleham in which an old man and woman lived. It was built of clunch, was about 100 years old & the walls had no foundation. When the woman was going to bed the floor of the bedroom sank down to the basement. The owner was giving the matter his attention - he is rebuilding that part of the cottage that fell down. But there are numerous other cottages in similar condition. 12 10 25a

1912 11 29

An Inquiry heard that a new footpath had been laid from The Crofts to the Mereside, Soham, and the old one stopped up. Benjamin Bradshaw, a basket maker of Pratt Street, said there was no right of way over the land but it was just for people who had allotments. But James Westley, auctioneer, said he had used it frequently and it had never been obstructed. Rev J.A. Wilson said the land had belonged to the church and congregation of Isleham for 200 years. The Parish Council should come to an agreement to take it over. 12 11 29b & c

1913 01 03

Isleham unwanted sewing machine

Isleham parish council refuse responsibility for deficiency in building cottages

1913 03 14

Isleham Belinda Aves leaves for Canada

1913 03 28

On Easter Monday Richard Harvey, of Isleham, made an attempt to walk 50 miles in ten hours on the road between the Crown Hotel Newmarket and the July course toll bar. But after 24 miles he complained of a stitch in his side and gave up. Later he continued the walk, covering another ten miles. He attributes his failure to drinking port wine with eggs. Had he stuck to beer he thinks he would have succeeded 13 03 28 p4 CIP

1913 04 11

Many people will regret to learn of the misfortune that has befallen Mr Martin Frost who left Isleham for Australia several years ago. He settled about seven miles north of Melbourne and recently lost the whole of his household furniture and effects through fire. It appears that owing to the illness of his wife he was living in a canvas dwelling and as the contents were not insured (no company would accept the risk), the loss is total. 13 04 11 p11 CIP

1913 04 11

Isleham Horse Club has been in existence for nearly 30 years and has done much good work in the locality. It has a good reserve in hand, amounting to £300. The annual dinner at the Red Lion was enjoyed by over 30 members and afterwards the horses were paraded and valued. But a familiar figure, Noah Turford of the Pits, who for many years acted as a carrier to and from the station, has passed away, aged 70. 13 04 11 p11

1913 05 09

Isleham Ascension Day tea for old people over 70 and widows is quite a village institution, this being its 24th anniversary.

1913 05 30

Ebenezer Driver, an Isleham gravel and shingle merchant told the court he owned 16 lighters and a steam tug. He'd delivered eleven lighter loads of sand and gravel to Southery for the Methwold & Feltwell Drainage Board to use as concrete at the pumping station. Heber Martin, surveyor of Littleport said he'd measured the barges and worked out the amount supplied. Joseph Whitehead said he'd carted it from the lighters. But the Board disputed the quantity. The suggestion that being fenland it had acted as a quick-sand and swallowed up the materials could not be accepted since the ground was so hard people could not get a pick into it. It was possible more sand and gravel had been used in making the concrete than they'd allowed for. 13 05 30 p8 CIP

1913 06 13

The famous American preacher, Dr A.C. Dixon paid a brief visit to the famous Isleham Ferry where the late Rev Charles Haddon Spurgeon was baptised in May 1850 and showed great interest in the scene of the immersion. He also visited Mrs Petch of West Street who was baptised at the same time and has a very vivid recollection of the event. After a stay of three hours he motored back to Cambridge 13 06 13 p11 CIP

1913 06 20

Isleham parish council

1913 06 27

P.S. Haylock testified he was near the Cock Inn, Isleham Fen when he heard talking and laughing. He saw the landlord coming from the tap room with four mugs of beer in his hand at 10.27 pm, which was after hours. One man nipped out of the back door but there were six inside, with the lodger. It was a lonely place, six miles from both Soham and Isleham. They didn't often get visits from the police. The landlord claimed they'd refused to leave; they were big fellows and he could not bundle them out. He was fined. 13 06 27 p11 CIP

1913 07 04

Isleham workmen's cottages & p10

1913 07 25

Property market, Isleham

1913 08 01

Flower show, Littleport, Romsey Town, Isleham Cherry Hinton

1913 08 08

Isleham hospital parade

Isleham Baptist minister resigns

1913 09 12

Isleham vicars list

1913 11 21

Newmarket Guardians received a letter from Fred Starling of East End, Isleham which read: "I, the said Frederick Starling, kindly ask the Board to find me a wife between 65 and 70. I am a bird-catcher, and have a comfortable room for a respectable woman". Mr Robins said he must be difficult to please if he could not find a wife in Isleham. The Master said he had no one to recommend 13 11 21 p4



1913 12 05

Isleham Starling who applied for wife, fell in ditch

1913 12 12

Isleham smallholdings presentation

1913 12 19 p9

Isleham Houghton catches fire

1914 02 06

Licenses considered for Fen Ditton Globe Inn, Somersham Rising Sun & Crown & Punchbowl, Isleham Queens Head closed 14 02 06k

1914 02 13h

Blaze. — On Monday evening, about 10.40, a big stack fire was only averted by a prompt alarm given by Mr. J. Scott, of Fordham, who was returning home from Isleham. Near the Hall Barn Road he noticed a glow of fire dangerously near two stacks belonging to Mr. F. G. Robins. Quickly giving the alarm, many helpers were soon present, including Supt Winter, P.c.s Rowlinson, Whitwood and Poole. After two hours' hard work, the fire was put out, but the stacks only just escaped. It seems that after thrashing, some mustard litter was ignited and left to burn. This smouldered longer than was expected, and when the wind increased, became a danger to the other stacks.

1914 04 10

Emigration — Mr. Reginald Fyson, youngest son of Mr. Wm. Fyson, Senior, farmer and corn merchant in this village (Isleham), left England for Melbourne, Australia, and sailed by the Osterly Orient Line. We are pleased to state that he arrived safely, and had a pleasant voyage. He is an electrical engineer by profession, and since his arrival has met Mr. Sydney Rudland, son of Mr. J. J., Rudland, corn merchant (Isleham), who went out to Australia some two or three years ago, and Mr. John Driver, son of Mr. Benjamin Driver, fruit grower (Isleham). The keenest interest among their many friends will be taken in their welfare.

1914 05 29

Wasps.—Queen wasps have been seen very frequently in the village (Isleham) during the past few weeks, and many of the residents have been very successful in their capture. Mr J. C. Sparke caught over 70 in a very short time in a small bottle, and in all probability this invention of his would be a great and beneficial remedy if adopted by the district at large.

1914 06 19

Isleham residents complained to the Local Government Board about Newmarket RDC's failure to provide dwellings for the working classes. There are scores of cottages with only one bedroom and many others are empty, having been condemned as utterly unfit for habitation. Most are built of clunch, are from 80 to 100 years old and are damp and rotten. Rev Newling, when he was pastor of the Baptist Chapel had obtained a site for cottages to be built by the RDC but since he left the matter had ceased to engage attention 14 06 19 p11

1914 07 31

Isleham flower show

1914 09 25

Isleham housing problems

1914 10 09

Isleham war effort

1914 10 16



Isleham kia

1914 11 06

Belgians – Littleport, Burwell, Chatteris, Duxford, Comberton, Sawston, Elsworth, Fen Drayton, Swavesey, Fordham, West Wickham, Wicken, Gamlingay, Willingham, Madingley, Isleham, Landbeach, Linton, Lode, Oakington

1914 12 11

Isleham diphtheria

1914 12 18

Isleham fen diphtheria, Whitehead wounded, Belgians arrive

1919 10 01

Riot at Isleham, effigies publicly burned and windows smashed; revolver fired – Co-op stores damaged – 19 10 01d

1919 04 02

New magistrates, — Mr. Ebenezer William Diver, of Isleham, and Mr. Sidney Augustus Taylor, of Dullingham, have been appointed Justices of the Peace for the County of Cambridgeshire, it is announced.

1920 09 15

Isleham parish council will not pay RDC charge for cost of making road on the river bank

January 7, 1920

Rats Killed, Up to December 3rd last the number of rats killed in the county and paid for by Cambs County Council under the Rats Order, was 35,516. The districts concerned were: Little Abington (number of rats killed 504), Ashley (980), Balsham (2,718), Borough Green (358), Bottisham (999), Cheveley (631). Chippenham (838), Great Chishill (322), Croxton (225), Dullingham (1,205), Duxford (754), Elsworth (39), Fordham (8,072), Fowlmere (489), Harston (322), Hauxton (186). Heydon (1,593), Hildersham (236). Horseheath (324), Ickleton (1,095), Isleham (3,809), Kennett (1,422). Kirtling (396), Kneesworth (549), Linton (584), Lode (548), Melbourn (442), Newton (160), Pampisford (429), Sawston (332), Shepreth (313). Shudy Camps (1.38), Snailwell (786), Soham (2,896), Stetchworth (1,105) Swaffham Prior (1,032), Thriplow (464), Waterbeach (967), West Wickham (995), Whittlesford (324), Great Wilbraham (846), Wood Ditton (2,017).

1921 06 15

Fens roads dispute Soham & Isleham Bank Drove – not a public highway – 21 06 15c

1925 08 12

Ely was nearly dry from noon on Monday to 11am Tuesday owing to the city's water supply from Isleham having been held up through the bursting of a main at Stuntney, where water spouted two feet into the air. Residents were warned by Mr R. Wayman, the city's blind crier, that water should be used carefully. The lower part of Ely was more fortunate as the reservoir on Cambridge Road contained 80,000 gallons. This was run off at slow pressure and they were kept supplied until about 7 pm.

1926 07 30

A large building at Isleham, forty feet high, used as a stables and barn and belonging to Mr Fred Robins, collapsed. Three horses which were inside were killed, being entirely buried in the debris. Mr Victor Driver, who is in charge of the horses, was just outside the door and so escaped by a few yards. Four other horses had been taken out just before. The dead animals were dug out in the evening.

1928 04 18

A deputation of seven men from Isleham walked over to the meeting of Newmarket Guardians to ask the Board for work. Five are married men with families and four in receipt of out-relief. Mr Samuel Moore said he had heard of certain parties obtaining relief when they had £60 in the house. Some men left regular jobs to get a shilling more and then when the new job came to an end they were out of work. A land worker who had a good job should stick to it. This was the time of year when men were wanted on the land. The men said they had tried everywhere to get work.

1928 09 20

Newmarket R.D.C. Corners Committee inspected the corner at the junction of Pound Lane with Church Street, Isleham. They were of opinion that an improvement could be effected by the removal of the frontage wall to the site of the Pound, which abuts on the corner, & by leaving the site open to the highway. The Parish Council is to be asked to remove the wall with the possibility of a builder carrying out the work in exchange for the materials. They then inspected a corner at the junction of Fordham Road and Red Row Soham and recommend that tenders be obtained for taking down 12 yards of concrete wall and rebuilding a new frontage five yards further back.

1929 01 03

An Isleham baker was summonsed by the inspector of weights and measures for having loaves deficient in weight. He accepted the measurement although he always put three ounces of dough above the weight required to cover evaporation during baking. But under the prosecution act it was stated that the loaves must be for sale and these had been weighed in the bakehouse. They might in due course have been offered to the public but were not then for sale. The case was dismissed.

1929 07 17

Proposed road Prickwillow to Isleham – CDN 17.7.29

1930 01 10

The drove under the bank at Isleham which is the only means of access to the houses alongside the river is in a terrible state, full of holes filled with mud and water and well night impassable. Some of the children attending school have to wade through mud and water over their boot tops for two miles and arrive so tired they are not in a fit condition for their lessons. Some years ago the school had to be closed owing to the impossibility of the mistress getting to there.

1930 01 13

A child living in Isleham fen who was suffering from diphtheria had to be taken to the fever hospital in an open cart, there being no means of getting the ambulance up to the house, and it died the Monday following. Another child, aged nine, had to be carried on a stretcher for a long distance until the hard road was reached. The Fen Bank Drove serves a number of dwelling houses and three public houses together with the school which was built in 1879. Men have been employed filling up holes and now that there is a great amount of unemployment this is a favourable time to put the road into repair

1930 06 11

Isleham headmaster, H.P. Hodges said the school had a room for special subjects where woodwork, cookery and washing were taught, and during the winter months the dinner hour was shortened and two-course dinners supplied at 2d per head. 18,000 meals were served in five years and a profit of five shillings had been made. It cost the County Council nothing. The teacher dined with the children and the cooking was done by the cookery mistress with the help of two older girls. 30 06 11a & b

1931 95 29

Public baptism, Isleham – 19 immersed – photo – 31 05 29d

1933 08 16

Water from four wells at the Pit, Isleham is unfit for drinking and they must be closed. They were probably contaminated from the top and ought to be inspected to see where it came from. Now another nineteen wells will be analysed. Councillors also discussed the bad state of Padney Road Wicken: something ought to be done before the heavy traffic of beet haulage began. 33 08 16

1934 09 20

An inquest was held at Isleham School on a lad who had fallen into the river in the fen. To get to the scene Dr McFeeters had to travel two and a half miles of very bad fen road. "A car cannot travel down there in safety. I went on my bicycle because it was the quickest way of getting there and it took me 13 minutes. If there had been a main road I could have got there quicker and the result would have been rather different", he testified. Neighbours carried out artificial respiration until he got there but there was no sign of life. 34 09 20

1934 12 28

William Sindall was one of the most prominent of Cambridge business men. Born at Isleham he served his apprenticeship and established the well-known building firm 60 years ago. It has erected many University and college buildings besides undertaking a number of other important contracts. A councillor and Alderman, Mr Sindall was director of the Waterworks Company and the Cambridge Chronicle. He was also associated with the arts and crafts side of the Cambridgeshire Technical School. 34 12 28a

1935 05 01

Plans for the construction of new roads alongside the River Lark from Isleham to Prickwillow and from Tunnel Drove, Soham will shorten the distance to the Beet Sugar Factory by four miles. 35 05 01a

1935 05 09

A new road from Isleham alongside the River Lark to Prickwillow would benefit the whole of the parish: "It is a place of all places on earth that most people would object to live in in consequence of its situation and the road would bring Isleham out of the rut and help employment", said Coun, Moore. Half the cost would be obtained from the Ministry of Transport though there were some very light-fingered gentlemen in Parliament and when short of money they dived their hands into funds they were not entitled to. 35 05 09

1935 10 14

A hard road through the fen from Isleham to Prickwillow had become urgent owing to the Lark river bank being covered with gault by the Ouse Catchment Board, preventing its use by traffic. It had been used by people on foot or on horse and in 1788 tolls were charged at the Prickwillow end which had continued until recent years. A hamlet grew up with three public houses before 1835 and a school built in 1879. But it was a private road that could not be taken over by the County Council until it had been put in repair by the owners of the land. 35 10 14 & a

1935 11 02

Isleham woman drowned in water butt – 35 11 02

1936 05 04

The proposed road alongside the River Lark from Isleham to Prickwillow cannot be safely built owing to the leaking through the river bank. Instead a road should be constructed along Black Drove and Black Wing Drove with a hard road along Spooner's Drove to the Fen Bank. There would be extra cost due to the need to put in four more bridges and foundations because of the peat soil. Owners felt the construction of a road away from the river was not of use and had reduced their contributions to the scheme but the top of the river bank would be gravelled to enable them to get to their houses. 36 05 04

1936 11 05

The Isle of Ely County Council approved the erection of a new bridge to carry the Peterborough-Wisbech road over the river Nene at Guyhirn. This was part of a vast scheme which will link up with the Leicester-Great Yarmouth road. At Prickwillow the Ouse Catchment Board had agreed that the new bridge need be only an inch higher than the existing one, instead of 1ft 3ins as originally contemplated. Plans were also submitted for the reconstruction of the bridge on Puntney Hill drove, part of one of the alternative routes for the proposed Isleham-Prickwillow road. 36 11 05b

1937 06 16

Isleham has no public water supply and the inhabitants are dependent on private sources. These consist of shallow wells in the chalk varying in depth from 10 to 45 feet. There were about 160 of them situated close to houses. Samples taken for analysis from wells in the old chalk pit containing 40 houses, show most were unsafe for drinking purposes. Others were liable to pollution. The refuse from pail water closets was disposed of upon garden ground or allotments. But the borehole for Ely Waterworks was near the railway bridge and the water main supplying the Ely rural district passed through the village. 37 06 16

1937 09 29

A scheme of 1853 provided Ely with a supply of water from the River Ouse which was stored in an underground reservoir then pumped to the water tower. The old reservoir was abandoned in 1885 and in 1933 was converted into an open-air swimming pool. Then steam-driven wells were sunk at Isleham to take water from the chalk. Now they plan a new underground reservoir tank which, with the present water tower, will ensure four day's supply in the event of emergency. But proposals for another water tower will not be proceeded with on account of its vulnerability to attacks by aircraft, councillors heard. 37 09 29a

1937 11 02

Isleham church civic service with Sheriff and Mayor – 37 11 02c

1938 01 05

An occupant of the Council Houses, Mildenhall Road, Fordham was charged with stealing two rabbit traps, the property of Major Thirwell Philipson. Charles Howes, an under-gamekeeper, said he went to look at some rabbit traps on the Chippenham Road and saw two were sprung. He could not set them owing to the frost. The next morning the traps were missing. Pc Parmenter testified that he went to the defendant's house and found two wet and muddy traps in the shed. The man said he'd been walking along the road when his dog brought a rabbit and trap to him. He'd got the other from Isleham Pits. He was found guilty 38 01 05

1938 01 14

Ely water tower on Cambridge Road, was built in 1853 and took water from the River Ouse until 1884-5 when by a deep well was sunk at Isleham. It was designed for a population of only 6,000 – 2,500 fewer than now – and needed to be constantly topped up. In case of war, when supplies of electricity or crude oil might be suspended, the tank would be totally inadequate to meet demand from the sugar factory, brewery and laundry. This would leave no water for fire-fighting purposes. They needed a larger reservoir in a field adjoining the present tower, an Inquiry heard 38 01 14 & a

1938 03 23

Isleham church small chapel and window dating back to 12th century unveiled – 38 03 23 & a

1938 09 15

Nearly a mile of Main Drove, Little Downham, may be metalled now the Ministry had approved a grant of 50% of the cost providing owners contribute one-third. The road would be 12 feet wide with passing places and link up with Short Drove, Pymore. If it were constructed in concrete it would shorten the work by five weeks. There is no provision in the budget but £1,400 had been provided for the proposed Isleham-Prickwillow road and there was no likelihood of this being built during the present year, Isle Councillors heard. 38 09 15

1939 03 22

Isleham-Prickwillow road costs – 39 03 22

1940 02 28

Newmarket RDC water scheme delay, Isleham Fen Bank – 40 02 28a

1940 07 12

D.S.C. for Isleham Man.—Sub-Lt. Philip Donald Julian Sparke, R.N. (Fleet Air Arm), son of Donald Sparke, R.A.F. and grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Sparke, Isleham, has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery. Sub.-Lt. Sparke was one of the survivors of H.M.S. *Courageous* in the early part of the war.

1940 10 04

Golden Wedding Days. — Two Cambridge couples have just reached the golden anniversary of their weddings. Mr. and Mrs. William Charles Stacey, who celebrated their golden wedding on Friday at Annesdale House, Mill Road, were formerly well-known in Newmarket, where they resided for many years. Mr. Stacey worked as a painter and decorator for Mr. Peck, Newmarket, and other employers. He and his wife were married at Isleham Parish Church, and although 76 and 77 respectively, have excellent health. They came to live with their daughter, Mrs. Haylett, at Annesdale House, a few years ago. They have two sons and a daughter living and four grandchildren. One son was killed in the last war. In celebration of the anniversary, a family party is to be held on Monday.—Five years after their wedding 50 years ago, Mr. and Mrs. William Loker came to live in Great Eastern Street (Cambridge), and they have lived there ever since. They have occupied No. 2, Great Eastern Street, for the past 36 years, moving there from No. 14. Mr. and Mrs. Loker, who are 73 and 72 respectively, were married at Holy Trinity Church, Wimbledon, on September 28, 1890. Before coming to Cambridge, they lived at Little Shelford for five years. Mr. Loker's connection with the Foresters' Hope Lodge at Little Shelford extends over 57 years, and he has held every office, including that of Chief Ranger. He worked at Foster's Mill, near the station, for 37 years, retiring seven years ago.

1941 06 20

Old-time names of villages.— The recent paragraph giving the old-time names of several Cambridge streets has led a correspondent to compile from old books and documents a list of some old-time village names (says Watchman). Most of these old names, it may be said, are taken from the "Cambridgeshire" section of "Magna Britannia," a valuable work compiled by the Rev. David Lysons and Mr. Samuel Lysons and published in the year 1808. The present-day name is given first, the old name following it in parentheses; Abington Pigotts (Abington in the Clay). Babraham (Baburham, Badburgham, and Badburham), Burrough Green (Burgh), Coton (Cotes), Croydon (Crawden), Fowlmere (Foulmire and Fulmere), Harston (Harlston), East Hatley (Castell Hatley), Hatley St. George (Hungry Halley), Hauxton (Hawkstpn), Cherry Hinton (Hinton), Oakington (Hokington), Isleham (Iselham), Horningsea (Hornsey), Kirtling (Chartelinge. Catlige and Catlage). Pampisford (Pamps-worth), Quy or Stow-cum-Quy (Stow-Quy), Thriplow (Triplow). There are, of course, very much older and more peculiar names to some villages, notably those in the Domesday Book, compiled in the time of William the Conqueror and finished in the summer of 1086. The above old names, however, are some which appear to have been in use in comparatively modern times, or, say, 133 years ago.

1943 11 12

Gift to Minesweeper - The Isleham branch of the G.T.C. have for the last three months been sending a hamper of vegetables and fruit fortnightly to a minesweeper. A number of grateful letters have been received, thanking the girls for their kindness. One letter said: "It does help tremendously when we are at sea to know that you people at home are thinking of us and doing so much to make things pleasant for us."

1945 06 22

Birthday Honours. — The second section of the Birthday Honours List, published on Friday, includes the award of the O.B.E. to the following officials: Mr. J. M. McMillan Executive Officer of the Cambridgeshire W.A.E.C.; Capt. C. O Groom, hon secretary of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Help Society for the Isle of Ely and Cambridge; Mr. McMillan was trained in Edinburgh, where he took a B.Sc. in Agriculture. He came to Cambridge in 1930 as organiser of Agricultural Education for the County Council, and at the beginning of the war was seconded to the W.A.E.C. He has been concerned to a large extent with fenland reclamation and the construction of concrete roads in the fens at Swaffham Prior, Burwell, Isleham, Over and Cottenham. The King and Queen saw some of the work when they visited Swaffham and Burwell in June, 1942. Capt. Groom is a retired Regular Army officer, living, at Wisbech, and takes a keen interest in the ex-Servicemen. He is president of the Workmen's Club and the Institute of Wisbech, and is also a director of Groom Bros. Ltd., who are farmers in the district.

1946 07 08

River Lark overflows banks at Isleham – weeds block flow; teams battle on banks, NFS pump water –  
46 07 08

1948 01 14

Mr P. Porteous of the Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Company gave details of the sources from which his company obtained their supplies and said each one was approaching the limit of capacity of their present sources and were having to look further afield. Cambridgeshire County Council were required to bear a substantial proportion of the cost of these new works. He was concerned in regard to a scheme to deepen certain dykes in the neighbourhood of Isleham where there would be a great risk of depleting the underground water in the source there. If the dyke in the fen were cut down low and into the edge of the chalk they would bleed out all the water in the upper reservoir and, as a result, there would be a very difficult position at Isleham during the summer months

1948 07 19

Standing waste deep in the shaded waters of the River Lark in the Cambridgeshire village of Isleham, a young Baptist minister yesterday performed a baptismal service within five minutes walks of the exact spot where Charles Haddon Spurgeon, most famous of all Baptist preachers, was baptised in 1850. Pastor A.G. Ashdown addressed the congregation, took off his jacket and as the crowd took up the words of the hymn "Happy Days" he waded into the deepest part of the river. The four candidates, who had already confessed their faith, were then led into the river. One by one they were completely immersed under the water

1949 03 17

Isleham village dramatic society were due to begin a three-nightly run of "Charley's Aunt" at the school hall at 7.30 pm. At 5 o'clock officials from the County Architect's department refused to allow the play to go on as the hall did not meet the stringent requirement of the safety regulations. At 5.45pm the village crier was called out to go on his round giving news of the last-minute bombshell to the disappointed villagers. Busloads of playgoers were due to arrive from Soham and Beck Row. After a lot of frantic telephoning the buses were cancelled and money refunded.

1949 10 13

Newmarket and surrounding districts were shaken by an enormous explosion when a giant 6-engined American B50, the latest type of US bomber still on the secret list, crashed at Isleham. All members of the crew, believed to consist of 12 airmen, were killed instantly. The blazing remains of the aircraft were scattered over the area of 500 square yards on the Beck Road. Neighbouring farm buildings and haystacks at Worlington were set afire. The B50 is designed for long-distance bombing and is said to be specially adapted for carrying atom bombs

1949 10 17



A tribute to the pilot and crew of the US Stratobomber which crashed and exploded at Isleham was paid at the inquest in the Isleham village school – its walls cracked and damaged by the explosion which was only 400 yards away. Recording a verdict of accidental death the coroner said the pilot took every step he could to avoid and save damage to this village. Had he landed in Isleham we do not know what the death-role and damage would have been but we can ascertain it would have been colossal.

1949 10 28

The county council are to be recommended to take steps to obtain an order subjecting High Street Swavesey to a 30 mph speed limit. It will also be imposed in built up areas at Burwell, Isleham, Shepreth, Bassingbourn and Lt Abington. But they refused Kingston parish council's application for a speed limit there

1950 09 05

The proposal by the Minister of Agriculture to take over 700 acres of land at Isleham fen has not been confirmed by the Agricultural Land Tribunal who heard an appeal by 33 tenants against it. The Minister's proposals were in the best interests of food production but there was a large volume of evidence that the land could be better farmed in small units. The land had been requisitioned in the early days of the war and administered since by the War Ag. The Tribunal also decided not to confirm proposals in respect of Rectory and Top Farms, Hemingford Abbots.

1952 05 06

More than 300 people attended the public baptism of four American Service men in the river Lark at Isleham. Although these services on the river bank are not new it is believed that this is the first time that the Americans have held one exclusively for their own men. It was 102 years to the day since the famous Baptist preacher, Spurgeon, was baptised there. The service was conducted by U.S.A.F. Lakenheath Chaplain John E. Bryden who said: "I got a real thrill out of it because Spurgeon was always one of my heroes"

1954 07 21

Not since the 14th-century has Isleham Priory Church heard such music as that sung during a unique service. The Priory, which is only used for the week in the year in which St Margaret's day falls, was illuminated by candles. There were over 100 people present as 50 servers from around the area walked in procession from the Parish Church singing the hymn 'O Son of God goes forth to war'. The other music, called plainsong, was that used regularly at the Priory before it was closed in 1325. Next Sunday Parish Communion will be held, probably the first occasion on which the Holy Eucharist will have been celebrated there since the suppression of the Priory.

1950 03 04

British Railways had considered closing the Cambridge-Mildenhall line because of its steady loss in revenue and uneconomic running costs. But now they hope that by the introduction of two-car diesel units and cheaper fares they can make the line a paying proposition. But people in Isleham had to walk to the station and in some instances this was three miles away; others had to go to Kennett station. They wanted convenience and had petitioned for a bus service. Messrs Murfet's would provide a bus into Cambridge for those who wished to shop or visit the cattle market; it would also serve Chippenham and Snailwell. 50 03 04

1955 05 13

The County Council wrote to the Great Ouse River Board over the cost of metalling Fen Bank Road, Isleham. The road is used by their lorries in connection with the maintenance of the flood bank, this caused damage to the road and inconvenience to the farmers and tenants of houses to whom it was the only means of access. The cost of constructing a nine feet wide reinforced concrete road with passing places would be about £7,000. But the Board says their workmen had filled up potholes and left the road in a better condition. 55 05 13a

1955 08 28



Workmen engaged on the restoration of Isleham church have made an interesting discovery: the solid oak beams in the roof are riddled with lead shot. Carved figures that could be reached from the ground were defaced by the Roundheads but since the angels in the roof are 60 feet above floor level they fired at them instead. A number of dead bats have been found in the roof but no beetles. However they have been there as some of the wood crumbles at the touch 55 08 20a/aa

1956 03 28

Proposals to purchase a caravan for use as a staff room at Gamlingay school were described as an insult to the whole parish. An alternative was to use a disused Isleham hut; it needed a new floor and new sides but would cost £200, a third of the price of the caravan. The village had already sacrificed two badly-needed council houses for teachers. 56 03 28a

1958 09 17

Light industries are needed to stop young people leaving the area. The rate of migration from Isleham had been amazing and 75 people leave Dullingham to work each day. The biscuit factory at Fordham has closed down because transport facilities were so bad that the cost of bringing materials more than outweighed the cheaper cost of labour. There were factory sites at Soham and the council was prepared to assist any firm wishing to move in. 58 09 17

1958 10 23

Isleham teenagers monopolise telephone kiosks – 58 10 23a

1959 01 14

A slippage in the bank of the Ely Ouse at Braham Dock caused and a large team of workmen were sent to deal with the incident. While they were there another slip happened and during the night about 60 workmen were engaged in repairing the banks. Another serious incident was averted by the quick action of the aged engineer at the old 'Pepper Pop' mill on the River Lark, near Isleham. At 2.30 am he was awaked by the sound of rushing water and discovered a culvert had started to overflow. He contacted the River Board who managed to control the damage. 59 01 14a

1959 03 14

Mr Cyril Petch of Orchard House, Isleham will shortly leave the village to live in the London area. What his new work will be cannot be disclosed, but it is a job of national importance. He has an astonishing record of public service on Newmarket RDC, Cambridgeshire County Council and as Governor of Soham Grammar School. In Isleham he's been chairman of the Parish Council, Sports and Village Hall committees, playing no little part in getting the magnificent hall erected in 1952. As a farmer he organised the fight for the return of fen land after the war. There are few organisations in the district which did not benefit from his sound common sense and wisdom. 59 03 14

1959 10 23

A pint of beer, an ounce of tobacco and two boxes of matches cost fivepence-halfpenny when Mr & Mrs E.D. Clark first took over the 'Rising Sun' public house at Isleham nearly 50 years ago. There have been vast changes in drinking habits. Before the First World War they were open from 6am to 10pm and a man could have a good evening out on six-pence – about three pints of beer. After the war women started to come with their husbands. Stout and port-and-lemon have always been popular women's drinks, though the Rising Sun sold more beer and spirits than anything else. 59 10 23

1960 01 08

Two Isleham brothers, Arthur and Bill Houghton, have a knack for digging up hidden treasure. A few years ago they were working on a housing site at Snailwell when a Belgae chieftain's grave was discovered. Now they have come across a vast amount of broken tools and weapons thought to have been the stock-in-trade of a bronze founder or smith. It is one of the largest ever to be found in Britain. The site at Little Isleham was once a populated hamlet with a chapel dedicated to St Nicholas but nothing now remains of the community. 60 01 08c

1960 01 15

Two men were killed when a five-ton lorry owned by the Great Ouse River Board was in collision with a two-coach diesel train on a farm-service crossing between Isleham and Worlington. The front of the train was badly smashed and passengers severely shaken. Rescue workers were hampered by icy roads leading to the Lee Farm crossing, which is in a very isolated position. The line is now open under caution as the permanent way is damaged. 60 01 15

1960 04 06

An articulated lorry carrying 10 tons of paper cartons for a frozen food firm overturned at Mitcham's Corner at dawn. The load was catapulted through three plate-glass windows of Mitcham's shop but the lorry driver, Charles Wain of Isleham, was unhurt. The manager, Edward Pull who lives above the shop was awakened by a terrific crash at 5.30 am. Two of the three windows had been recently put in and on display were carpets and soft furnishings. 60 04 06a

1960 08 20

Two Cambridgeshire rivers are so heavily polluted that the County Medical Officer has posted notices warning of the dangers to bathers. The River Lark at Isleham receives the outfall of the Bury St Edmunds sewage disposal works at Lackford. But samples taken at Waterbeach, Fen Ditton and Grantchester show the pollution in the Cam is even worse 60 08 20

1961 09 04

A large congregation gathered on the river bank at Isleham for a Believers' Baptism Service. Hymns were accompanied by a portable organ and the lesson read by Pastor Eric Woodroffe of the Pound Lane Baptist Chapel as 16 year-old apprentice engineer Donald Gee and 62-year-old William Summers entered the waist-deep waters of the River Lark to be completely immersed by the Rev Peter Chevill. Most baptisms take place in chapel baptisteries but as neither chapel at Isleham has one, the Minister decided to use the river. 61 09 04

1961 12 20

The railway line between Cambridge and Mildenhall opened on Whit Monday 1884 with the Fordham to Mildenhall extension nine months later. The branch line was probably never self-supporting and today there are two trains daily. All the villages between Barnwell and Fordham are well served by buses and it is only Mildenhall and Isleham that do not have a satisfactory alternative service. All existing parcel facilities would remain except at Isleham and Quy stations which would be reduced to unstaffed sidings. Even at Quy staff would be provided during the heavy sugar beet season to assist farmers loading traffic, an Inquiry heard. 61 12 20a & b

1962 04 16

An electrical storm near Isleham was the most violent in living memory. It lasted only 15 minutes but behind it there was a trail of shattered fir poles, dead cable and a jagged crack running down a farmhouse wall. The storm hit the area with such force that the top half of electricity poles carrying 11,000 volt cable between Elderberry and Burn Foot Tree farms were split in half. Scientists have noticed that electrical storms are becoming more violent, especially in the Fens. The area around Burwell has always experienced storms of greater severity due, possibly, to an excess of iron content in the sub-soil 62 04 16b

1962 12 17

Some 28 miles of concrete fen roads around Isleham, Soham, Willingham and Swaffham Prior are to be taken over by the County Council over a period of up to three years. Cambridgeshire Farmers Union had requested they should be adopted and maintained at public expense. The Internal Drainage Boards had agreed to finance the cost of bringing them up to satisfactory standard 62 05 14  
Winds gusting up to 70mph brought damage to all parts of Cambridgeshire. In Cambridge a Panton Street house was damaged when a chimney stack crashed through the roof and scaffolding collapsed at the new Addenbrooke's Hospital. At Somersham a man was killed when a giant elm tree fell on to

the van in which he was travelling, Isleham was without electricity for seven hours and nearly 30 roads blocked by falling trees 62 12 17a

1963 07 10

A court heard of a secret meeting along the Cambridge-Newmarket Road once a week when American cigarettes and bottles of spirits were exchanged. An Isleham labourer pleaded guilty to five charges involving two cameras, 6,460 cigarettes, 44 bottles of spirits and one bottle of wine on which duty had not been paid. While working at Mickey's tea bar at RAF Mildenhall he'd lent money to American servicemen was paid back partly in cigarettes. Later an airman asked him to sell liquor for him to a 'gypsy-looking man' in a pub near Cambridge Market 63 07 10

1964 01 03

Isleham shop sale bill, 1880 64 01 03a

1964 02 13

Isleham church bells to be rehung – 64 02 13

1964 03 18

The Education Committee have decided to change the route of the bus carrying children from Isleham to Soham Village College so that it avoids Fen Road, which parents claim is dangerous. Isleham parish council support the protests about the narrowness of the road and deep dykes on either side. MP Francis Pym also thinks it dangerous and will take the matter up 64 03 18a

1964 08 18

Isleham church angels fired at by Cromwell's men – 64 08 18a

Isleham vote on whether to close recreation ground on Sunday – interesting feature – 64 11 18b

1964 11 19

Isleham Pits houses – dilapidated and crumbling cottages surrounded by rubble and waist-high weeds 64 11 19d

1966 04 29

Railway stations to be sold at Six Mile Bottom, Sutton (pic), Bluntisham, Haddenham, Harston, Wilburton, Stretham, Dullingham, Isleham, Longstanton – 66 04 29a

1966 08 09

Island site on River Lark near Isleham locks chosen for development as holiday centre – 66 08 09

1976 03 22

Isleham's Methodists are having to hold services in their own homes as a result of the closure of the village's 136-year-old chapel after cracks appeared in its north wall. The small, clunch-build chapel stands perched on the edge of the village's old clunch pit. The congregation usually numbers about 20.

1978 04 07

A growing number of rampaging foxes are causing havoc among the hens and ducks of the area around Wicken Fen, but the warden doubts the foxes are breeding on the fen. Farmer Stephen Beckett of Isleham said: "Four or five years ago we didn't know what a fox was around here. But now we've got them all over the area. Six weeks ago my brother saw a group of three on his land". The secretary of the Naturalists' Trust said the fox population had gone up very markedly, but so has the rabbit population which causes more damage. Elsewhere huntsmen are complaining of a shortage because of a demand for red fox fur by the fashion industry. An uncured pelt can fetch £18 before the furrier and fashion house begin to mark up the price of the finished article.

1983 04 07

Isleham locals had seen it all before – the television cameras and crowds for a sporting even on the recreation ground. 1975 was the year that the village gained national fame as their cricket team charged all the way to the heady heights of Lords in the Village Championship final. But this week attention was focussed on the village's under-12 football team who had lost all their games, conceding 271 goals in the process. They were the worst team in Cambridgeshire. But not any more. In an epic battle they defeated a Peterborough side to lose the title of the worst team in Cambridgeshire, 83 04 07 p18

1985 01 29

Salvage of Hurricane which collided Wellington May 1941 Isleham – 85 01 29 & a

1985 05 28

When Tom and Audrey Chipper arrived to take over the running of the Baptist church in the quiet fenland village of Isleham in 1972 they had no idea of the dramatic changes that lay ahead. They became Born Again Christians and since then the church has grown beyond recognition: the Sunday congregation is now around 350 and has formed a daughter church in Newmarket with a membership of 100. The church practices healing with praying, laying on of hands and anointing with oil. Four people have gone abroad to take up missionary work in Uganda, Nigeria and Pakistan. 85 02 12a More than 90 members of the Peyton family converged on Cambridgeshire for a family reunion. They came from England, America, Newmarket Zealand, Australia and South Africa to Isleham where in 1450 Thomas Peyton married the lord of the manor's daughter. They had stayed in the village until 1642 when hard times forced many to emigrate to America and Ireland. It was the third time the Peytons have gathered together in Isleham and a new church window was dedicated. 86 05 28